

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3704

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PL

SUBJECT: JEWISH CEMETERIES: VISIT OF US RABINICAL DELEGATION

REF: STATE 204120, WARSAW 6079

1. ACCOMPANIED BY RABBIS DAVID LIFSHITZ, ARON TEITLEBAUM, M. BERKSTEIN, Z. HARCZSTAK, AND SIMCHA ELBERG, LEADERS OF THE MAJOR AMERICAN RABBINICAL ORGANIZATIONS, RABBI ISAAC LEWIN CALLED AT THE EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 7 TO DISCUSS THE PRESERVATION OF JEWISH CEMETERIES IN POLAND. HE SAID THAT AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING IMMIGRANTS FROM SPECIFIC POLISH LOCALITIES (I.E., LANDSMANSAFTEN) WERE EAGER TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF INDIVIDUAL CEMETERIES, IN COOPERATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES. HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY SUPPORT WITH THE POLISH AUTHORITIES THE DELEGATION'S REQUEST FOR DISCUSSIONS BASED ON THIS PRINCIPLE.

2. MR. WILLIAM PERRY, PRESIDENT OF NEW YORK CITY LOCAL NO. 6 OF THE LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION (ILA), HELPED PLAN THE VISIT AND ACCOMPANIED THE RABBIS. HE INTERRUPTED THE MEETING TO SAY THAT HE THOUGH THE POLISH GOVERNMENT WAS "MAKING MONKEYS" OUT OF THE RABBIS BY INVITING THEM AND NOT PRODUCING ANY RESULTS. HE DEPLORED THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE FEW REMAINING POLISH JEWS AND LAMBASTED THE U.S.

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POLICY OF AFFORDING CREDITS TO POLAND WITHOUT GETTING

A QUID PRO QUO IN THE FORM OF BETTER CONDITIONS FOR THESE "PEOPLE IN WHOM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED". HE SAID THAT IF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT PRODUCE THE AGREEMENT MENTIONED TO HIM A YEAR AGO BY AMBASSADOR TRAMPCZYNSKI (I.E., TO RESTORE THE WARSAW AND LODZ CEMETERIES AND TO ALLOW OTHER CEMETERIES TO BE RESTORED WITH FOREIGN FUNDS), HE WOULD RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES AND TIE UP ALL SHIPPING TO AND FROM POLAND.

3. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED TO MR. PERRY THAT HE WAS FREE TO DO AS HE PLEASED, BUT IF HE DECIDED TO PROVOKE A BOYCOTT OF POLISH SHIPPING, HE WOULD ALSO HARM AMERICAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS, AS WELL AS THE EFFORTS OF POLISH-AMERICAN FAMILIES TO ACHIEVE REUNIFICATION.

4. AFTER MR. PERRY WALKED OUT THE THE MEETING, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WOULD MENTION THE RABBIS' REQUEST IN A MEETING HE EXPECTED TO HAVE LATER THIS WEEK WITH AN OFFICIAL OF THE MFA. SPEAKING FRANKLY, HE SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT JUDAISM WOULD DIE OUT IN POLAND, AS MR. PERRY HAD ANGRILY PREDICTED IT WOULD. HOWEVER, KEEPING THE JEWISH LEGACY ALIVE WAS AN IMPORTANT GOAL WHICH WE FULLY SUPPORT.

5. THE RABBIS EXPRESSED THERE APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT ALREADY GIVEN THEIR EFFORTS BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY AND THEIR GRATIFICATION AT BEING ABLE TO MEET ON THIS SUBJECT TODAY.

6. COMMENT: MR. PERRY CALLED THE EMBASSY AND ASKED TO JOIN THE BREIFING. WHEN THE RABBIS LEARNED HE PLANNED TO ATTEND, THERE WAS DISCUSSION AMONG THEM WHETHER HE SHOULD BE INCLUDED. ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE BLUFFING, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WANTS HIS VIEWS TO RECEIVE THE WIDEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY IN WASHINGTON. END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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